

**ELDORADO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE NEW MEXICO GIRLS CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (January 28, 2019) — In its 34th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, The Gatorade Company, today announced Jasmine Turtle-Morales of Eldorado High School as its 2018-19 Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year. Turtle-Morales is the second Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year to be chosen from Eldorado High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the racecourse, distinguishes Turtle-Morales as New Mexico's best high school girls cross country runner. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year award to be announced in February, Turtle-Morales joins an elite alumni association of past state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lukas Verzbicas (2010-11, 2009-10 Carl Sandburg High School, Orland Park, Ill.), Megan Goethals (2009-10, Rochester High School, Rochester Hills, Mich.), Jordan Hasay (2008-09, Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School, San Luis Obispo, Calif.) and Chris Derrick (2007-08, Neuqua Valley High School, Naperville, Ill.).

The 5-foot-1 junior won the Class 5A state meet title this past season with a time of 18:22.45, breaking the tape 25.05 seconds ahead of her next-closest competitor and leading the Eagles to a first-place finish as a team. Turtle-Morales finished 20th at the Nike Cross Nationals Southwest Regional championships, the top New Mexico runner by 32 seconds.

Turtle-Morales has volunteered locally with Lap Dog Rescue of New Mexico, and has donated her time to a summer camp for children impacted by AIDS and HIV. "Jasmine was definitely the most dominant girl in our state this fall," said Kenny Henry, head coach of Cleveland High. "She shows a great deal of determination within her races and graciousness afterwards."

Turtle-Morales has maintained a B average in the classroom. She will begin her senior year of high school this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which work with top sport-specific experts and a media advisory board of accomplished, veteran prep sports journalists to determine the state winners in each sport.

Turtle-Morales joins Gatorade New Mexico Girls Cross Country Runners of the Year Amanda Mayoral (2017-18, 2016-17 & 2015-16, Cleveland High School), Natasha Bernal (2014-15, La Cueva High School), and Kelli Reagan (2013-14, St. Pius X High School) as athletes who have won the cross country award since its inception in 2007.

As a part of Gatorade's cause marketing platform "Play it Forward," Turtle-Morales has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national youth sports organization of her choosing. She is also eligible to submit an essay to win one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants for the organization of choice, which will be announced throughout the year.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit www.Gatorade.com/POY, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GatoradePOY or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/Gatorade.